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SUBJECT: CHALABI AIDE DISCUSSES RECONCILIATION IN KARKH,
ADHAMIYA WALL

REF: BAGHDAD 1479

Classified By: Deputy Political Counselor Charles Blaha for reasons 1.4
(B) and (D).

[¶1.](#) (C) Summary: An aide to Ahmad Chalabi, chairman of popular mobilization for the Baghdad Security Plan (BSP), told PRToff May 1 that Chalabi,s staff met this week with Jaysh Al-Mehdi (JAM) and Sunni extremist elements from the Karkh district to promote reconciliation. The aide, Sermad Al-Qaisy, said Chalabi secured pledges from both sides to shun violence and facilitate the return of internally displaced persons (IDPs) to the area. Al-Qaisy added that Chalabi is continuing his efforts to re-open mosques and husseiniyas (Shia houses of worship) in cooperation with the Sunni and Shia Waqf. End summary.

Chalabi Promotes Reconciliation in Karkh

[¶2.](#) (C) An aide to Ahmad Chalabi, chairman of popular mobilization for the BSP, told PRToff May 1 that Chalabi,s staff met this week with JAM and Sunni extremist elements from the Haifa and Rahmaniya neighborhoods of the Karkh district to promote reconciliation. The aide, Sermad Al-Qaisy, said other community leaders and representatives from the Iraqi Army and Iraq Police attended the meeting. He said that both JAM and Sunni extremist elements agreed to shun violence and sectarianism in order to pacify the neighborhood, facilitate the return of both Sunni and Shia IDPs (most IDPs who fled the area are Sunni), and re-open closed mosques and husseiniyas. Al-Qaisy also said that both sides agreed to identify criminal elements from within their ranks operating in the Karkh area to Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and assist in bringing them to justice.

[¶3.](#) (C) Al-Qaisy said another meeting including more participants from the community will eventually be held at the Mansour Media Hotel to follow up and identify other areas for improvement.

[¶4.](#) (C) PRToff asked Al-Qaisy if he believed average Sunni residents who had fled the area will be willing to return just because JAM elements have provided promises to guarantee their safety. Al-Qaisy replied that he believed JAM elements might keep their word because they know Sunni extremists will retaliate against Shia residents if they do not. He added that ISF will monitor both sides. Provincial Council members who work with IDPs told PRToff that Sunni IDPs are unlikely to return to an area where JAM still exerts influence.

Chalabi to Coordinate Mosque Re-Openings with Waqf

[¶5.](#) (C) Al-Qaisy said Chalabi has started working with the Sunni and Shia Waqf to facilitate the re-opening of mosques. He said that to date Chalabi,s mosque re-opening efforts have concentrated on private mosques not belonging to the

Waqf. (Comment: In previous meetings Chalabi aides have said they avoided coordinating efforts to re-open mosques with the Waqf because the Waqf was unhelpful. End comment.)

Chalabi Promotes Support for Adhamiya Security Wall

¶7. (C) Al-Qaisy said Chalabi recently met with community leaders from Adhamiya to promote local support for the security wall being built there. Al-Qaisy claimed that most residents oppose the wall, which he said they view as a jail rather than a security measure for their protection. He said average Baghdad residents reject the building of security walls due to the perceived likeness with Israel's security barrier and fears that Baghdad will become broken into a series of walled communities isolated from each other. He added that average residents say security walls will exacerbate sectarian polarization.

¶8. (C) Comment: Baghdad Provincial Chairman Mueen Al-Kadhemi has publicly criticized the wall, but some local officials and Adhamiya residents have told PRToffs that the wall is a welcome measure that is improving security in their area (reftel). Other residents have told PRToffs that they believe building walls will only exacerbate sectarian tensions and will not improve security. End comment.

¶9. (C) Al-Qaisy said Prime Minister Maliki and others approved the building of security walls and should explain their utility to the public rather than fueling the perception that the walls are an American plot to inflame sectarian tensions. He added that Chalabi will promote support for security walls by explaining their benefits in his media engagements.

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PM Asks Chalabi Aide to Report on Other BSP Committees

¶10. (C) Al-Qaisy claimed that Prime Minister Maliki asked him in private meeting to monitor the progress of other Baghdad Security Plan committees and report whether they are making the progress they claim. He added that Maliki is particularly concerned that the economic and essential services committees are making false claims about their progress. Al-Qaisy said Chalabi was not present at the meeting.

Security Problems in the IZ due to Iraqi Blue Badge Holders

¶10. (C) Al-Qaisy said Iraqis holding blue International Zone (IZ) badges are responsible for a recent spike of security problems in the IZ. (Note: Blue badge holders can enter the IZ without personal or vehicle searches and may carry weapons. End note.) Al-Qaisy, himself a blue badge holder, said he regularly sees Iraqi blue badge holders escort others in and leave them unsupervised (rules dictate that escorts should remain with their guests at all times). Al-Qaisy said many Iraqi blue badge holders, including Iraqi officials, have known ties with militias and insurgents and should not be allowed to enter the IZ unsearched.

¶11. (C) Al-Qaisy, a resident of the IZ, said rumors have been circulating that civilians will be targeted for kidnapping in the IZ. He said &everyone knows how easy it would be to snatch an unarmed civilian, throw him in the trunk of a car of a blue badge holder, and drive him out of the IZ.8 Al-Qaisy, himself a resident of the IZ, said he no longer feels safe letting his wife and children leave the house without him inside the IZ.

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